



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMISSION



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Alok Bhatt

Dear Senator Coleman, Representative Tong, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Alok Bhatt. I serve as Legislative Analyst for the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission (APAAC).

In promoting civil rights for all Connecticut residents, as well as equity in employment opportunity in our state, APAAC writes in strong support of Senate Bill 467: An Act Concerning Municipal Implementation of Criminal Justice Reforms (SB 467).

Section 2 of SB 467 essentially mirrors language in House Bill 5237: An Act Concerning Fair Chance Employment (HB 5237), which APAAC supported before the Labor & Public Employees Committee.

Section 2 of SB 467 contains important provisions that would give formerly incarcerated individuals a fair chance at gainful employment.

First, the bill provides that no job applicant has to disclose their criminal history to any prospective employer. The employer may run a background check on any individual after making a conditional offer for the position. This measure removes a significant barrier to employment, as formerly incarcerated individuals will have a greater chance to stepping through the door for an interview.

Furthermore, SB 467 prohibits employers from denying employment or otherwise discriminating against job applicants, solely on the basis of a criminal conviction, if five years have passed since the date of conviction for a misdemeanor, or ten years have passed since the date of conviction for a felony. This provision will help end the cycle of recidivism that afflicts so many community members left without opportunities to make better of their lives.

SB 467 also prevents employers from discharging against present employees solely on the basis of a criminal record if two years have passed since the date of conviction for a misdemeanor, or if five years have passed since the date of conviction for a felony. This measure would ensure that employees do not endure discrimination because of a past for which they have already paid.

Ultimately, SB 467 promotes good employer practices and helps make Connecticut a truly second chance society. The past should not be an

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indefinitely yoke upon our residents. We all have made mistakes of varying degrees, and all deserve a chance to move beyond them.

I thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Alok Bhatt
Legislative Analyst, APAAC

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